

**Appropriations Committee Testimony of William Lugo**  
**CSU-AAUP Council Representative and Faculty Advisory Committee**  
**Representative to the Board of Regents**

**February 23, 2015**

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to talk today. My name is William Lugo. I am chair of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work Department at Eastern Connecticut State University, a CSU-AAUP Council Representative, and I sit on the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents.

I don't have a lot to say, nor will I say that the sky is falling. Because no matter what you decide, my institution, and the 16 others in the CSCU system, will have to live with it. But what I am asking for is a moment of honesty. The question I am asking you to consider is not whether our institutions will survive the legislature's cuts, but what will be left after them for Connecticut youth? That's the million dollar question that you will have to decide- and I do not envy you for being in that position.

Two years ago, I was outside the capitol building protesting with my students. We were fighting against tuition increases. I was one of only two professors who showed up that day and I took a lot of heat for it. I was told I was turning my back against other faculty, against my institution. I was told we needed to keep raising tuition to offset the decrease in support we were getting from the legislature. And even though more resources meant we could keep our faculty lines, and keep our institutional and departmental budgets at manageable levels, I could not look my students in the eye and ask them to pay more. So I bit my tongue and I did not testify before the legislature then.

But now I am faced with an even more difficult decision. Looking at the plan before us, we have to consider the question "Are we at a breaking point?" Not a breaking point of ending higher education- because like I said, no matter what you decide, we will have to live with it. But you cannot give someone a cardboard box and tell them they have a house. You cannot give students a computer and say "teach yourself for two or four years" and I'll give you a degree. I do not make these statements lightly. There are proposals out there like this- make no mistake, and cuts such as these will bring them to the forefront- permanently damaging our system of higher education.

And how will you know if we have crossed that line? The litmus test is here. We are those voices and we are saying our system is in danger and trust me when I say there is no plan out there-NONE- not at the departmental, institutional, or system level that can sustain the cuts this body is proposing.

I have fought for Connecticut students in protecting their financial interests and never spoke out against cuts to the CSCU system- because at the end of the day, I could always look my students in the eye and tell them their education would be ok. Soon I will not be able to say this. In the end, our student's education doesn't need to be transformed. It needs to be maintained and protected. Help me do that so we can look Connecticut youth in the eye and tell them they are still getting a quality higher education. Thank you for your time.

William Lugo, PhD